

# Is the Year of Redemption Upon Us?

By T.W. Tramm

IN LUKE 21, Jesus famously states:

“And when these [signs of the end] begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your *redemption* is drawing near” (v. 28).

What does the Lord mean when He says our “*redemption* is drawing near”?

Paul sheds some light:

“We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for... the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23).

“When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance *until the [bodily] redemption* of those who are God’s possession” (Eph. 1:13, 14).<sup>1</sup>

According to the Apostle to the Gentiles, the term “redemption” refers not just to the spiritual deliverance that happens when we become believers but, more precisely, the *physical* deliverance—the miraculous change, or glorification, our bodies will experience at the end of the age.

So when Jesus says to “look up” as our “redemption” is drawing near, He is referring to the Rapture!

That our redemption occurs at the Rapture is confirmed in Revelation where the just-raptured saints are described as being “redeemed”:

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have *redeemed* us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation’” (Rev. 5:9).

Another verse linking our redemption to the Rapture is Isaiah 63:4 where Jesus is seen executing judgment because the “year... to *redeem*” (Rapture) had come:

“It was for me the day of vengeance; the year for me to *redeem* had come” (Isa. 63:4).

Notice Isaiah specifies there is an *appointed year* during which our redemption is to occur: “the *year... to redeem.*”

What is “the year to redeem”?

A major clue is found in Leviticus 25 where the word “redeem” is used over a dozen times in connection with the jubilee year.

The Jubilee was a special year-long Sabbath that occurred once every forty-nine years. During the Jubilee, debt was forgiven: Those who had sold themselves into slavery were granted liberty and property was returned to its original owner. In this way, both people and land were “redeemed” in the jubilee year.

Knowing that the Jubilee is the “year of redemption,” and that “redemption” refers to the *glorification of our bodies at the Rapture*,<sup>2</sup> the sixty-four thousand dollar question becomes: WHEN is the year of redemption?

Some scholars say there is no way to know, as the Bible records no observance or dateable landmark event from which to establish the long-unobserved and thus “lost” jubilee cycle.

But is it true that Scripture contains no dateable reference to a jubilee year?

Consider the following verse from Daniel’s famous “prophecy of seventy weeks”:

“Know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be *seven weeks*...” (Dan. 9:25 NASB).

In considering the above verse, it’s crucial to understand that Daniel’s way of reckoning time, by “weeks” of years, is unique to the biblical/Jewish calendar: In Scripture, a seven, or a “week,” is understood to denote a *sabbatical cycle* (a seven-year period ending in a Sabbath year). “Seven weeks” are, in the same way, understood to denote a *jubilee cycle* (a forty-nine year period ending in a jubilee year).

And so the “seven weeks” of Daniel 9:25 denote a jubilee cycle—but not just *any* jubilee cycle. Notice this forty-nine year span is said to commence with a return<sup>3</sup> to Jerusalem and culminate in the coming of “Messiah the Prince.”

Did you catch that?

Daniel is saying that forty-nine years after the Jewish return to Jerusalem (in a jubilee year) Messiah the Prince will come—*also* in a jubilee year!

If this is true, you may be wondering: Why don’t people know? How is it not being declared in giant block letters across every church billboard that Jesus is set to return during the first Jubilee following the Jews’ prophetic return to Jerusalem?

One reason is that Bible prophecy is not discussed in the Church today: the typical pastor is woefully uninformed, and many of those who *are* informed avoid this type of subject matter for fear of losing audience or being labeled a “date setter.”

Another reason most Christians are unaware of Daniel’s jubilee “countdown” is that the popular interpretation of verse 25 fails to appreciate the significance of the seven weeks. Most commentators simply *add* this jubilee cycle to the sixty-two weeks (sixty-two sabbatical cycles) mentioned later to arrive at the dates of events related to Jesus’ first coming. They reason that God must have separated the seven weeks for the purpose of highlighting the time it would take to rebuild Jerusalem after the return from Babylonian captivity.<sup>4</sup>

But here’s a question for those who accept the above as the sole and correct interpretation of the seven weeks: Does it make sense—given the vast prophetic significance ascribed to the Jubilee as the “year of redemption” in Scripture—that the Lord would assign the *one and only* jubilee cycle referenced therein to what is, essentially, a *construction schedule*?

Isaac Newton didn’t think so.<sup>5</sup>

Newton, a devout believer and one of the most brilliant minds to ever study the Scriptures, believed that the seven weeks of Daniel were set apart for an infinitely more significant reason—namely, as a countdown to Messiah’s return. In his commentary on Daniel, Newton proposes that the prophecy of seventy weeks is effectively a *dual* foretelling, revealing the time of both Jesus’ first and second comings, and that the *second* coming would occur forty-nine years, or *one jubilee cycle*, after the Jews’ prophesied return to Jerusalem:

“[The prophecy foretells] both comings of Christ and [dates] the last from their returning and building Jerusalem.”<sup>6</sup>

“The seven weeks are the compass of a jubilee... [and] the commandment to return and to rebuild Jerusalem precedes the Messiah the Prince [this same period of] forty-nine years.”<sup>7</sup>

While Newton’s three-hundred-year-old commentary is fascinating, it also becomes exceedingly timely when we understand that the one and only Jewish return to Jerusalem in the last two-and-a-half millennia occurred *forty-nine years ago* in 1967. On June 28<sup>th</sup> of that year, a decree was issued recognizing the City of David as “one city indivisible, the capital of the State of Israel.”<sup>8</sup>

The decree of ‘67 is significant, as Daniel specifies we are to count the forty-nine years “from the issuing of a *decree*” (v. 25). Interestingly, when we count exactly forty-nine prophetic years (17,640 days) from the ‘67 decree, we arrive at October 14, 2015—the day of the first new moon after the fall equinox, or what those who reckon the biblical calendar according to the ancient method would call the “Feast of Trumpets.”<sup>9, 10, 11</sup>

Is it coincidence that there are *exactly* forty-nine prophetic years from the issuing of the '67 decree to day one, or "New Year's Day," of the current Jewish year, 5776?

As the rabbis are fond of saying, "Coincidence is not a kosher word."

Assuming that we are indeed in a jubilee year, it's important to understand that the year ends in October 2016. With this and everything else we've discussed here in mind, allow me to pose a simple yet provocative question: If our redemption is not set to occur *before the conclusion* of the "year of redemption," then *when*? Would it make sense for the Lord to redeem us in the year *after* the year of redemption, or the year after *that*?

Let's wrap up by summarizing the Scriptures linking the Rapture to the Jubilee:

- Jesus says to "look up" for our *redemption* (Luke 21:28).
- Paul associates *redemption* with the glorification of our bodies (Rom. 8:21-23; Eph. 1:13, 14).
- The glorification/*redemption* of our bodies occurs at the Rapture (1 Cor. 15:51-53).
- The Jubilee is the year of *redemption* (Lev. 25).
- Daniel states that from the time the Jews return to Jerusalem there will be one jubilee cycle until Messiah (Dan. 9:25).

Add to the above the fact that the *one and only* Jewish return to Jerusalem in the past 2,500 years occurred in June of 1967 (exactly *forty-nine prophetic years ago* last fall), and it doesn't take an Isaac Newton to do the math.

Are we about to be "redeemed" and instantaneously caught up into the clouds so the Lord can begin judging the earth?

Only God knows for certain.

But *now* is the time to be living every day as though it could be the day of redemption because, if we've interpreted the Scriptures correctly, it *could* be!

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NOTES:

1. Paul is explaining how the Holy Spirit is essentially the guarantee, or down payment, of our future *physical* redemption/deliverance from the "bondage to decay" (Rom. 8:21-23) we will experience at Jesus' coming.

2. More on how the Jubilee points to the Rapture (excerpted from *2015: the Final Jubilee?* by T.W. Tramm):

According to Leviticus 25, the Jubilee has two primary themes: 1) property, or land, is returned to its original owner, and 2) captives are granted freedom to return home. Each of these themes foreshadows a significant end-times event. The first theme, "land being returned to its original owner," pictures the Lord taking back the earth from its present ruler, Satan, as He begins to execute judgment. God as Owner-of-the-land is a common theme in the Bible. In Leviticus, the Lord declares, "The land is mine" (25:23). In Revelation, God is pictured taking back the land as great voices in heaven proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (11:15). This is a picture of the Jubilee! The other primary jubilee theme, "captives being freed to return home," suggests the Rapture. At this time, the saints will "return home" to their Father in heaven, having been "freed" from the slavery of mortal existence in a satanically corrupted world.

That the freeing of captives foreshadows the Rapture is corroborated by the Bible's characterization of this event as a time of "liberation" at which we are "delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. 8:19-23). In the above scenarios, both jubilee themes are aptly and ultimately fulfilled: the land (the earth) is returned to its Original Owner (God), and the captives (God's people) are liberated and allowed to return home (pp. 8, 9).

Paul's co-mingling of resurrection and jubilee language in Romans bolsters the connection between the Rapture and the Jubilee: "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be *delivered from the bondage* of corruption into the glorious *liberty* of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for...the *redemption* of our body." (Romans 8:19-23). The "manifestation of the sons of God" Paul speaks of is the resurrection, or rapture, event at which our bodies will be changed from corrupt to incorruptible. Note the jubilee references: "delivered from bondage," "liberty," and "redemption" (p. 16).

In a nutshell, the Jubilee was given to teach Israel, and by extension the world, about Messiah's plan to "redeem" the Creation (people and land) at His coming.

3. The Hebrew word translated "restore" in Daniel 9:25 actually means to "return, or come back" (Strong's H7725).

4. Significantly, commentators acknowledge that no one really knows how long it took to rebuild Jerusalem. The *Pulpit Commentary* states: "The city walls and internal buildings of Jerusalem *may* have taken fifty years to erect—we *simply cannot tell*" (emphasis added).

5. Newton writes: "The seven weeks are the compass of a jubilee and begin and end with actions proper for a jubilee and of the *highest nature* for which a jubilee can be kept" (Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*, Echo Library, 2007, p. 54).

6. Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*, Echo Library, 2007, p. 54.

7. Ibid.

8. <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/d.../campdavid/letters.phtml> (Scroll down to the sixth letter in the series.)

9. Scholars agree that the prophecies of Daniel are to be reckoned using the 360-day “prophetic” year.

10. When we add the 17,640 days to the June 7, 1967 *recapture date* of Jerusalem, we arrive at September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, the Day of Atonement on the modern (precalculated) Jewish calendar. This alignment, in addition to the other (June 28, 1967/Oct. 14, 2015) should be seen as evidence that the Lord is pointing us to the biblical year (5776) beginning in the fall of 2015 and ending in the fall of 2016.

11. “The easiest way to verify when the real festivals and future prophecies will occur is to memorize the dates of the spring and fall equinoxes. Spring begins between March 20 and March 22, the spring equinox. Fall begins between September 20 and September 22, or the fall or autumnal equinox. The first new moon following the spring equinox is the first of Nisan. The first new moon following the fall equinox will be the first of Tishri [or Feast of Trumpets]” (Ken Johnson, *Ancient Messianic Festivals* (p. 12). See also: [http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/The\\_Hidden\\_Day\\_-\\_Final\\_2-8-16.pdf](http://www.theseasonofreturn.com/The_Hidden_Day_-_Final_2-8-16.pdf)